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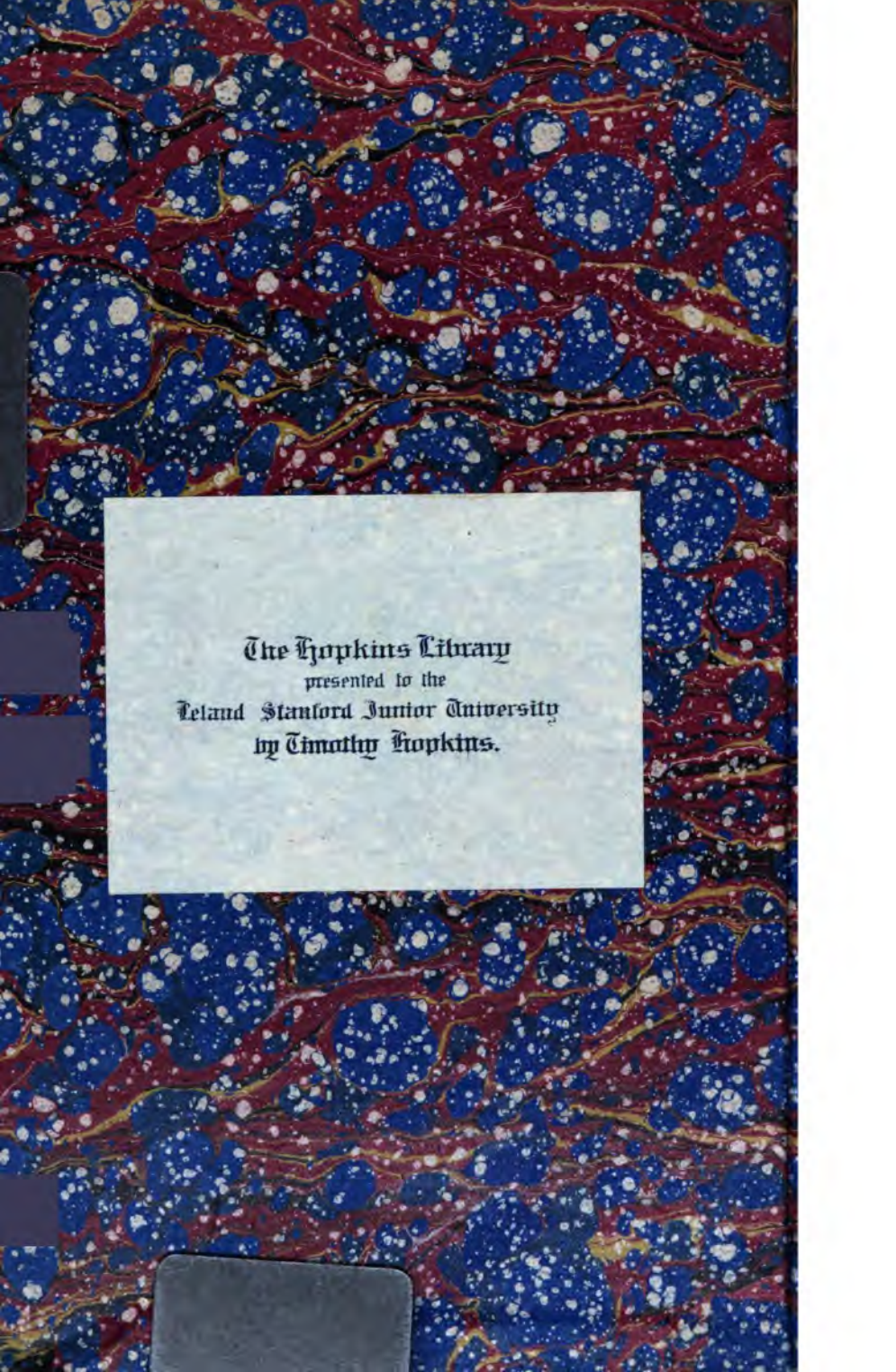
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GT. S<sup>O</sup> & WEST<sup>N</sup>.  
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1857

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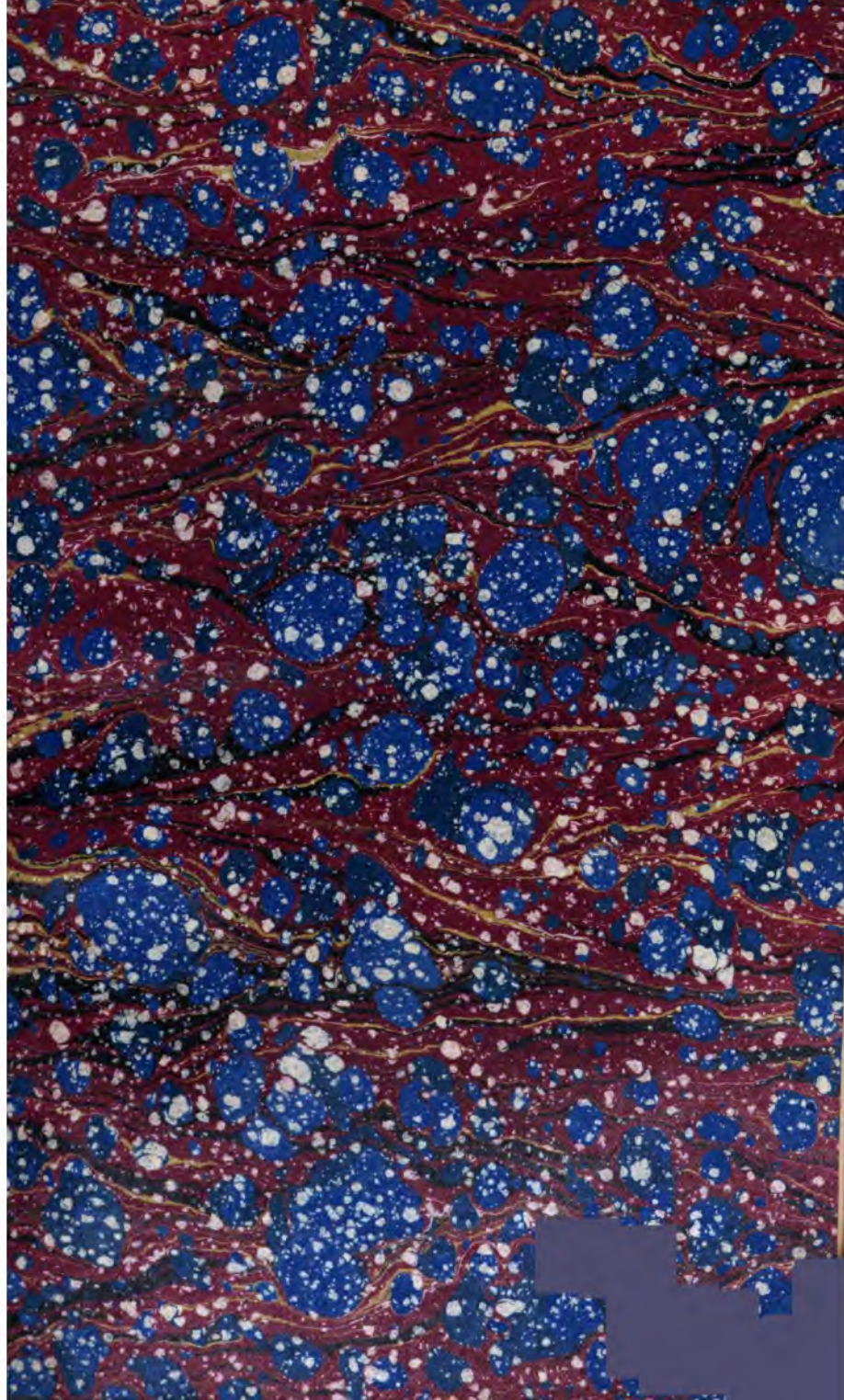
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*St. B. L. Parliament* **House of Commons.**

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**SELECT COMMITTEE ON RAILWA**

**(GROUP 14).** 16

**GATHORNE HARDY, Esq. in the Chair.**

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**GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN  
(OF IRELAND) RAILWAY**

**(EXTENSION FROM TULLAMORE TO ATHLONE).**

**Speeches of Mr. St. George Burke and Mr. Hope Scott,**

**JUNE 4TH AND 17TH, 1857.**

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**WESTMINSTER:**

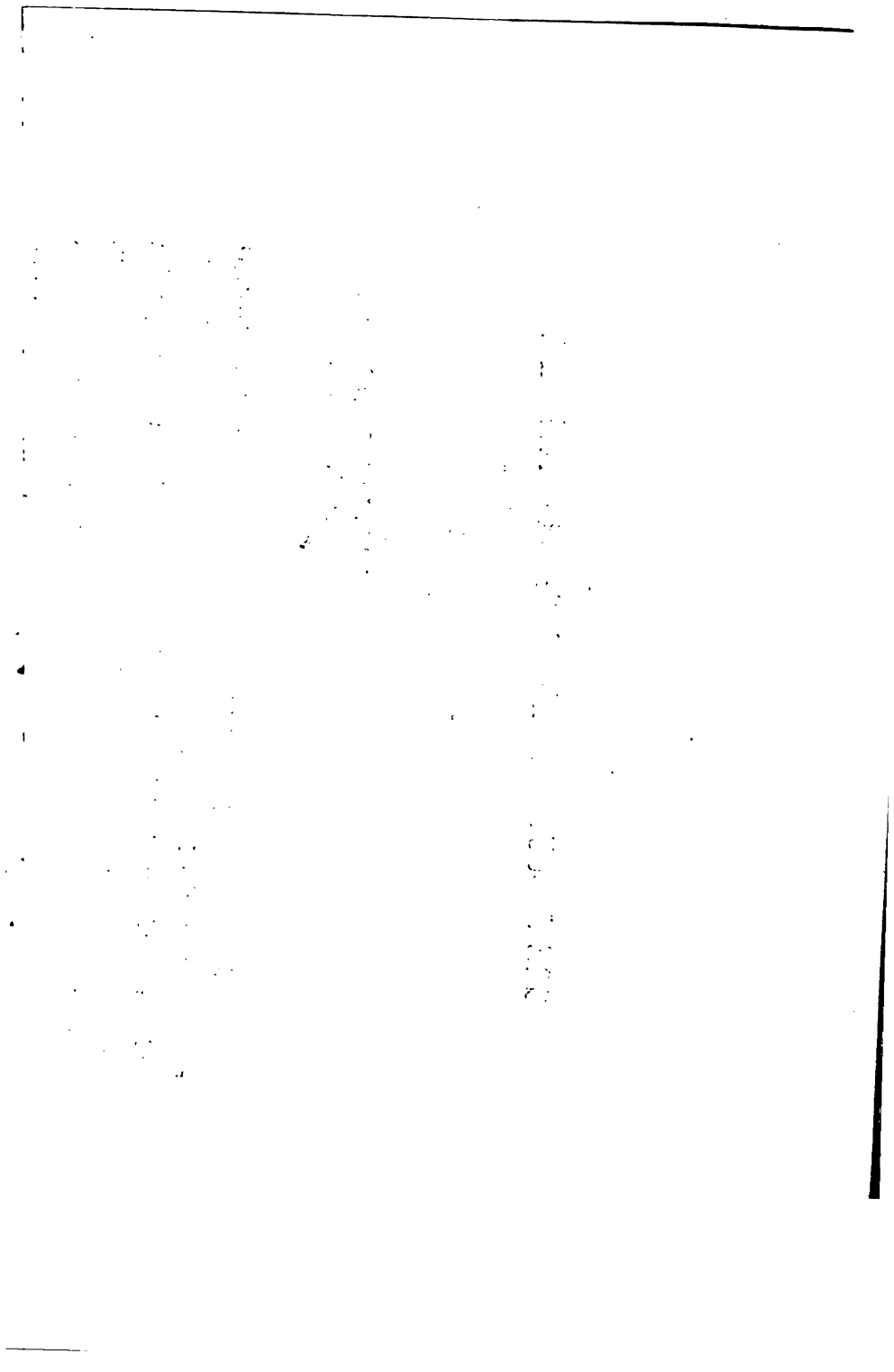
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**1857.**





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*Jovis, 4<sup>o</sup> die Junii, 1857.*

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**Mr. BURKE** opened the case. He said—

You have seen by the short discussion which has taken place, what are the Bills before you ; a Line promoted by the Great Southern and Western Railway of Ireland from Tullamore to Athlone ; an Extension from Athlone to Roscommon and Castlerea, promoted by a totally independent Company ; then a Line from Tullamore to Streamstown, promoted by the Midland Great Western, Ireland ; and a Line from Longford to Sligo, promoted by the same Company. These are the Bills you have to deal with, and I shall confine my observations to the two Lines, Tullamore to Athlone, and Tullamore to Streamstown.

Sir, I think it will be obvious, from an inspection of the map, that a communication between these two systems of Railway is a matter of absolute public necessity ; one cannot see the two lines, such as they are, from Dublin to Galway, and extending down to Cork, Waterford, &c. with only a small gap existing between them, without becoming satisfied it would be for the public interest that a junction between those Lines should take place, that the traffic from one to the other should be carried on continuously to its destination, whatever that may be ; and accordingly you will

not be surprised to find, that this subject has heretofore engaged the attention of Parliament. This is not the first time that this self same question has been under the notice of the Legislature. In 1854 the two Companies, the Great Southern and Western and the Midland Great Western, were before Parliament, with schemes identical to those before you now. In that Session also there was a scheme promoted by a Company called the Grand Junction Railway Company, extending from Athlone in the direction of this Roscommon Line, but a much more extended scheme at that time, going up as far as Sligo to Castlebar and Ballyna at the same time. That was a large measure supported by the local interests, but at the same time involving a large expenditure of capital, which it was extremely difficult for the parties to raise at that time, and they had recourse, therefore (as most Companies do now, who embark in these large undertakings), to the aid of contractors, who were to take a large portion of the stock. The Company in that year commenced their case before the Committee, and they had absolutely proceeded with it for three or four days; they placed no less a personage in the witness-box than Lord Palmerston to give evidence of the importance of the Line, when lo and behold! from what influence, or how it came about, we do not know, the contractors, who had agreed to take a large portion of our capital, said, "We shall not fulfil our bargain, and your Bill must be withdrawn." We had therefore nothing to do but to withdraw our Bill. No doubt, Sir, that had a serious influence on the future proceedings; and the result of the legislation of 1854 was that the Line of the Midland Great Western, from Tullamore to Streamstown, was thrown out, and the same fate awaited the Line from Tullamore to Athlone. No legislation whatever took place in that year, much, I think, to the regret of most parties.

You cannot look at Galway and other places, without seeing how desirable it is for them and their trade to have access to Cork, Portarlinton, and places in the South, and how desirable it is for those places to have access to them. Even leaving alone Athlone therefore, some junction is necessary. The great question you will have to consider is, where that junction should take place, whether it should be at Athlone or at Streamstown? But I think the fact of the necessity of a junction must be obvious to everybody who looks to the map alone without my making any observations upon it; and I think it would be greatly to the interest of the two Companies that Parliament should decide the question this year, prevent the wasteful expenditure of money in future Parliamentary contests, and decide, once for all, where that communication is to take place, by passing one of the two competing Lines; or, if the Committee think they are not inconsistent with each other, better pass both than pass none.

Sir, in order that you may perfectly understand the whole question on which you have to legislate, allow me to explain to you the position of these two great rival companies, the Great Southern and Western, and the Midland Great Western. The former preceded the Midland; it obtained its incorporation in 1844, and it may be within your recollection, prior to that time, the question of Railway communication in Ireland had engaged the attention of Her Majesty's Government. They pursued a course there which is not pursued in England (many people think, unfortunately) of sending a Commission to inquire into what would be the best lines of communication for Ireland. This Commission reported on every Line, and in particular recommended a Line in the direction of the Great Southern and Western, or very nearly in the direction of it. The Bill was brought in in 1844, and was so strongly supported by her Majesty's Government, as



well as all other interests, that, although scarcely any Standing Orders had been complied with, they were dispensed with, and the Line received the sanction of Parliament; it being then confined to the formation of a Railway from Dublin to Cashel, with a Branch to Carlow.

The Company, I should state, themselves had in view the extension of this Line not only south, but also to the west; that was always their original contemplation, and it is implied by their name "The Great Southern and Western Railway Company." It shows that that always was their original intention. I will read a passage from the report of their engineer Sir J. M'Neil, who states therein, to the Provisional Committee of the Great Southern and Western Railway, "A main Line to Galway and the west might leave the main trunk further south near Portarlinton. This Line would pass through the neighbourhood of Portarlinton and Tullamore, and so on to Galway." That is the report of the engineer to the Great Southern and Western Company in 1844; and their prospectus to the public, on which they got their capital, said this: "From this main trunk," alluding to the Line there advocated, "the country is most favourable for Branches to Clonmel, Lime-  
rick, and Galway, as pointed out by Sir J. M'Neil." I think you will see from that, both from the name of the Company, the early report of their engineer, and the prospectus issued, that the Great Southern and Western, in laying out their Line, always had it in contemplation, not only to afford a communication to the South, but either by the extension of the Line by themselves, or by Branches made by other Companies, to allow their Line to be the main channel out of Dublin, in the direction towards Galway; and I shall be able to bring before you the engineer, the gentleman who laid out this Line under Sir John M'Neil's direction, and who will state to you, as the fact is, that they

departed to a certain extent from the Line of the Government Commissioners, with the very view of facilitating the extension towards the west of Ireland.

Sir, that Act passed in the year 1844, and the prospectus pointed, as I have shown, to the eligibility of the extension of the line in the direction of Galway. In the year 1845 a new company, called The Irish Great Western, started for the purpose of carrying on that extension. From Portarlinton, where they joined our Line, they went away by Tullamore and Athlone, and so on to Galway; of course the Great Southern and Western, consistent with their original plans, gave an active support to that Company: they were anxious to see the Line carried out, as it was part of their original intention. It underwent investigation in the House of Commons, and was there successful. When it got to the House of Lords, some active parties presented a petition on Standing Orders against it, and on the formal matter of Standing Orders the Bill was unfortunately lost. Who those parties were it may not be difficult to conceive; but so it was. The Midland Great Western Company obtained their Act of Incorporation in the same year I am alluding to, 1845. Their Line being confined at that time to a Line from Dublin to Mullingar, with a Branch to Longford; I will deal with them hereafter. Now I am giving you the history of the Great Southern and Western.

That Bill having been thrown out on Standing Orders in 1845 was renewed in 1846, and on that occasion, in 1846, you may perhaps remember Railway Bills were allowed to begin in the House of Lords, with a view to facilitate the heavy business of the House of Commons in that Session.

The Irish Great Western was brought forward in the House of Lords on the first occasion, and received the sanction of the House of Lords.

It went to the House of Commons; there again, unfor-

unfortunately, the Bill was lost. And I think there is rather an important report of the Committee of the Lords who sat on that Bill in 1846 with reference to the question which is now engaging your attention—namely, the formation of a Line to Athlone from the Great Southern and Western Railway. The Midland Great Western having got their incorporation in 1845, in 1846 brought in a Bill themselves to extend their Line through Athlone to Galway. That Bill was referred, I believe, to the same Committee as the Irish Great Western Railway Bill. The Committee threw out so much of the Midland Bill as went between Athlone and Galway, and confined it to an extension of the Midland Line from Mullingar to Athlone, passing the whole Bill of the Irish Great Western from Portarlinton, through Tullamore and Athlone, to Galway. That was the decision of the House of Lords, and they accompanied it with the report which I will read:—

“The Committee having considered the Bill in conjunction  
 “ith the Bill for making a Railway from Portarlinton  
 “to the town of Galway—and having determined to recom-  
 “mend to the House the passing of the last mentioned Bill,  
 “have resolved it is expedient the operation of the first men-  
 “tioned Bill should be limited to the construction of the Line  
 “of Railway from Mullingar to Athlone, recommending  
 “strongly a Junction should be formed of the two Lines at  
 “Athlone at the earliest possible future period.” That is the opinion of a Committee of the House of Lords, who had before them at that time the whole question of communication with the West of Ireland. They had before them evidence, similar to that we shall bring before you, of the extreme importance of Athlone as a military station, and the great importance of the junction of the two systems at that town. Their decision was, that the main Line to Galway should be in connection with the Great Southern and Western, that the Midland should stop at Athlone, but that at Athlone a junc-



tion should take place between the two Lines. Circumstances have so turned out from the course of events, that the Midland Company, instead of us, have had the construction of the Line from Mullingar to Athlone and to Galway. We are here to fulfil the recommendation of the House of Lords in 1846, to give a connection between the two systems at Athlone.

That, Sir, was the legislation of 1846. In 1847 we obtained an Act to make a Line from Portarlinton to Tullamore. Then came bad times and financial difficulties all over Ireland. That Act was in abeyance for some time, was renewed in 1852, and since then the Line has been constructed. I should tell you also that, in 1846, the Company obtained an Act to extend their Railway to Cork. Instead of going to Cashel, as originally proposed, they diverted their Line to a certain extent to attain that object; and they now go through Thurles, and so get to Cork. They have also a Line from Portarlinton to Tullamore; and they have a branch to Parsonstown. It is not their own branch to Limerick; the Limerick and Waterford are the nominal owners of the fee, but the Great Southern and Western were to have the use of it conjointly with them.

*The Chairman.*—The Carlow Branch is called by another name on this map: it is called the Irish South Eastern.

*Mr. Burke.*—The Irish South Eastern goes to Kilkenny, but the Branch to Carlow is the property of the Great Southern and Western. The Irish South Eastern extends to Kilkenny; then comes the Kilkenny and Waterford.

The Great Southern and Western is, as I have stated, from Dublin to Tullamore and to Cork, with access to Limerick, to Carlow, and also to Parsonstown. The Branch to Parsonstown is not yet open.

Now, having explained what is the Great Southern and Western, let me point out what is our competitor. They were incorporated in the year 1845 for making a Railway

from Dublin to Mullingar, with a Branch to Longford, and they adopted the bank of the Royal Canal as the line of their Railway.

It was necessary for them, therefore, to possess themselves of that Canal, for the purpose of forming their Railway. Their Act of Parliament entitled them to purchase the Royal Canal, and they did so. The Royal Canal, as you will see, is a Canal which commences at the north of Dublin, goes to Mullingar, then up to the river Shannon, north of Athlone, with a Branch to Longford. It will be important for you to bear in mind the situation of the Canal, and the fact that the Midland Company are the possessors of it; so that they possess in that direction not only the land communication, but the Canal communication in the same direction, and up to the Shannon at Strokestown.

Now, Sir, I have told you what took place in the year 1846. In 1846 the Midland Company brought in their Line from Mullingar to Galway, but the House of Lords stopped it at Athlone. Therefore the legislation of that year is confined to getting a line to Athlone. In 1847 they renewed their application from Athlone to Galway, and the Act for the Line passed. Difficulties arose in the construction of that Railway, and in 1849 they obtained a Government grant to the extent of £500,000, to enable that line to be constructed, the county guaranteeing the interest on that sum of money; a subject which has given rise to a great deal of soreness. It is not for me to make any attack on the Midland Company; we have had a great deal of evidence heretofore on the fact that the guarantee has been maintained, and the country taxed largely for maintaining it, although the Company has been deriving considerable profits from their Line from Dublin to Athlone. It appears from Athlone to Galway it has not been so profitable, but that the counties have been called on to bear their contribution; that has consequently given

rise to a great deal of angry feeling, and the presentation of more than one petition to the House of Commons from the county of Galway. However, I have nothing to do with that here. Then I should tell you that Company afterwards made their Branch to Longford, and in 1852 obtained powers to make a Branch line from Longford to Cavan, so that the Midland system, so far as Railway is concerned, is a Line from Dublin all the way to Galway, by Athlone, with branches to Longford and to Cavan.

Now, having described the Railway system, permit me to turn your attention to another matter which will form a very important feature in the case, namely, the Grand Canal. The Grand Canal is a canal which commences at the south of Dublin, and proceeds thence to near Newbridge; it then goes on across by Tullamore, and joins the Shannon south of Athlone near a place called Shannon Harbour; it has a branch from thence to Ballinasloe, and another branch from near Philipstown to Killbeggan; it is also in connection with what is called the Barrow Navigation, and thus obtains access to Waterford, so that it gives direct access from Dublin down to Waterford, and it gives access from Dublin to the River Shannon right down to the sea below Limerick.

Sir, the Midland Company having become possessed, as I heretofore told you, of the Royal Canal, the Great Southern and Western Company, towards the year 1852, apprehending that measures would be taken with reference to the Grand Canal prejudicial to their interests, turned their attention to the acquisition of the Grand Canal. It passes, in a great measure, in the direction of their Line, going south in the direction of Carlow and Waterford, and also in the direction of Tullamore. They negotiated with the Grand Canal Company for the acquisition of the canal, subject to the authority of Parliament, and the Grand Canal Company entertained their application and made a bargain with them; but

the Midland Railway Company got word of the negociation, and they at once interfered, and said, If you obtain possession of the Grand Canal we shall require that you will carry on no sort of competition with us to Athlone, and you shall give us the possession of the canal up to Ballinasloe, which will be in the nature of a block to your carrying on competition in that direction. The Great Southern and Western considered the question; they did not think they were bound to make any such terms; they said the other Company were in possession not only of a line of Railway but a canal, and they did not see why if it was justifiable in the one case it would not be so in the other; they declined therefore the proposal of the Midland Railway Company, and the next step was for the Midland Company themselves to intervene to offer better terms to the Grand Canal Company, and in point of fact to make a bargain, under which they obtained possession of the Grand Canal. The purchase of the Grand Canal would of course be subject to the approval of Parliament, and, to deal shortly with that question, when they brought their Bill before Parliament it was rejected on a point of Standing Orders.

I do not think that it was ever considered on the merits. There has never been parliamentary sanction to the possession of the Grand Canal by the Midland Company, but, failing to get parliamentary sanction, they availed themselves of an Act of Parliament under which Canal Companies are allowed to be carriers of goods on their own Line, and have a power of leasing their tolls. They took advantage of that Act, and they obtained a lease of the tolls on the Canal, and thereby made themselves masters of the Canal. The Great Southern and Western Company felt themselves, as you may conceive, deeply aggrieved by this, and they moved, or parties in their interest moved, before the Master of the Rolls in Ireland, for an injunction against this lease as being



*ultra vires*. The Master of the Rolls granted that injunction, but the Midland Company appealed to the Chancellor of Ireland, and he held that the lease was within the four corners of the Act of Parliament to which I have referred. It is not for me to question the decision of so high an authority, nor has anybody attempted to question it, therefore the fact has remained ever since that the Midland Great Western have, by these indirect means *and without the sanction of Parliament*, obtained possession of the Grand Canal in addition to their Line of Railway and the Royal Canal.

Now, Sir, look what that does : the parties who have thus acted towards us, and to whose Petition I shall have to refer by and by, complain of our going from Tullamore to Athlone because, forsooth, it may abstract traffic from them. They say, Save and protect us ; do not allow this insane competition—that is the burden of the Petition : yet, Sir, that Company have possessed themselves not only of the Main Line of Railway running east and west through the centre of the country, but they have two Canal systems, whereby they command the whole of the traffic in that direction and by means thereof the whole of the traffic on the Shannon. They also compete with us by means of the Barrow Navigation, and they being a Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland, absolutely compete with the Great Southern and Western for traffic going in the direction of Waterford !

Just observe the effect of the possession of those Canals. The Midland Great Western, by the possession of those two lines of Canal, the one running into the Shannon near Strokestown at the north of Athlone, the other at Shannon Harbour on the south, have possessed themselves of the only two outlets of that great river communication. They hold it entirely in their own control ; they have bought up

or rented the steamers on the river; they do precisely as they like with the traffic on the river as well as the Canals, and they come down all the way to Limerick, and compete with the Great Southern and Western for their Limerick traffic. They carry quantities of emigrants in boats up the Grand Canal, and so to Dublin, in competition with the Great Southern and Western. These are the parties who are seeking protection at your hands.

I have stated before to you this was done without Parliamentary sanction; that will not at all surprise you. Some few years ago, when the Bill was before Parliament to sanction the purchase of the Grand Canal, the House of Commons appointed a Committee on Canal and Railway Amalgamations, which was presided over by Mr. Cardwell, at that time the President of the Board of Trade. They investigated the whole subject, and without drawing your attention to many passages of their elaborate Report, about the impolicy of permitting monopolies, they instance this extraordinary case as one of the most flagrant and prominent instances of the evils that might arise from a union between a Railway and a Canal Company. They state here, "The union of Railways and Canals is another most "difficult subject with which your Committee have been "engaged. This union, though so manifestly open to abuse, "has been carried by past legislation to a great extent. In "the present Session there were several Bill before Parlia- "ment having for their object the union of Canal with "Railway interests, and amongst them was a proposition "which, from its nature, will exemplify the importance of "this subject. The proposition was to unite the Grand "Canal of Ireland with the Midland Great Western Rail- "way, the proprietors of which, being already in possession "of the Royal Canal, would have thus obtained the entire "control of the communication both by Canal and Rail-

“way, from the east coast of Ireland across the navigable “waters of the Shannon on the west.” You cannot doubt from that passage, that if the Bill had not been thrown out on a point of form, the Board of Trade would have reported strongly against it, as well as this Committee, and the Bill would have been rejected by Parliament; and you would have had an expression of opinion by Parliament, that any such union between the Midland Great Western and the Grand Canal would be highly inexpedient on public grounds. Instead of having an Act of Parliament, I will not say they have evaded it, but they have taken advantage of the peculiar Act of Parliament to which I have referred, and they have obtained indirectly precisely the same result as they sought to obtain by means of an Act of Parliament.

*The Chairman.*—Can you tell me the duration of the lease?

*Mr. Burke.*—Seven years. Of course, what can be done for seven years, can be done for seven years more at the end of it; therefore we are always liable to the renewal of the lease at all times. I have pointed out how they do carry out competition with us at all points; and you will have evidence of gentlemen from Roscommon and Galway, who will tell you the possession of the Grand Canal by the Midland Company, as well as the Royal Canal, is detrimental to the public interest; it has enabled them to raise their freights as they have thought fit, and enables them to deal with the public as they think fit; and you will have an almost universality of opinion from witnesses of the highest respectability as to the inexpediency of that union between the Midland Railway and the Grand Canal.

Then, Sir, comes the legislation, which I have before referred to, of 1854, in which these two measures were brought before Parliament, and when, as I have stated, they were both rejected.

After their rejection, I believe both Companies were rather

anxious for peace; the Great Southern and Western felt themselves more particularly aggrieved by the possession of the Grand Canal in the hands of their rival Company, and negotiations were entered upon between the two to see if some terms could not be arranged, whereby competition between them might be put an end to, and the Grand Canal transferred from the Midland to the Great Southern and Western.

Those regulations proceeded to some extent; the Great Southern and Western throughout the negotiation maintained, that, if a junction was to take place between the two Railways, Athlone was the point at which the junction ought to take place.

The other Company equally strenuously contended that the junction was to take place at Streamstown, and the Junction Line to be in their own hands, so as to be a check on the Great Southern and Western in carrying their traffic to the west, unless according to the will of the Midland. They said, Before we give you up the Grand Canal, we insist you shall not make a Line to Athlone, but let us make a Line from Streamstown; and the obvious and avowed intention of what was proposed was, that it should be a block line to prevent the extension of the Great Southern and Western Railway. We were very desirous to possess the Canal, and we said, will you consent to an intermediate point of junction near Moate? They said no. We said at length, For the sake of peace, and to prevent this ruinous competition between us and the possibility of future competition, we will consent to Streamstown, provided you give us up the Grand Canal, and *that Parliament will give its sanction to the arrangement.* They said We will not give you up the Grand Canal altogether, but we will give it minus the Branches to Ballinasloe and Kilbeggan. At length the Great Southern and Western Company, after a long cor-



response, in which they evinced from time to time their desire for peace on equitable terms, agreed to that state of things provided the Grand Canal was ceded to them under the authority of Parliament. They said, In order to test that, in the first instance, let us apply to the Board of Trade; if the Board of Trade will give its sanction, we shall be prepared to carry out the bargain. Accordingly, the three Companies, the Grand Canal, the Midland Great Western, and the Great Southern and Western, united in the preparation of a statement signed by all the three Chairmen, as to the proposal to transfer the Grand Canal or part of it, minus its branches, to the Great Southern and Western, and they submitted that to the Board of Trade. In due course the Board of Trade sent in their reply, peremptorily refusing their assent to any such arrangement. The parties were then, Sir, all at sea; they made temporary traffic arrangements among themselves, subject to termination at three months' notice, or one month. Those arrangements were not satisfactory; they led to considerable disputes and complaints; they were put an end to, and the parties were left in the position in which they now are, seeking again the measures for which they sought in 1854, and to one or the other of which I trust the Committee will give its sanction.

In the meantime, Sir, and while these negotiations were going on between the two Companies, another started, viz., the Company who are promoting the Line from Athlone by Roscommon to Castlerea, the Bill for which will come before you by and by, promoted by the first people in that country, for I never in any Railway Bill with which I have been acquainted saw a more important set of promoters than are connected with that Line; they comprise the principal nobility and gentry of the surrounding districts, who are desirous to promote that Railway, and will give their evidence to support it. Their scheme first was, Sir, to make their Rail-

way, adopting the line of the Great Southern and Western now before the Committee, from Athlone to Tullamore, to carry out one complete scheme on to Roscommon, and I believe it was originally intended to go as far as Sligo and Castlebar, and to carry out the original intention of the Grand Junction Line, which was brought forward and lost in 1854. That Company, Sir, having announced its intention, and it being known they were prosecuting this scheme, the Midland Railway gentlemen of course saw that the filling up by them of the gap between Tullamore and Athlone would be just as hostile to them as its being filled up by the Great Southern and Western, and, although the Great Southern and Western were willing to have rested on their oars, and not to have carried on any contest in the present Session, the Midland Great Western, seeing that the gap between Tullamore and Athlone would be filled up by another Company, refused a suspension of hostilities, and determined to prosecute their Line from Tullamore to Streamstown in the present Session. Then, Sir, it was arranged that the local gentry should confine their application to Athlone, and Roscommon and that the Great Southern and Western should take up the position they did in 1854 from Tullamore to Athlone. So it is these Bills are brought before you, and you will not be able to shut your eyes to the fact, that this Line from Tullamore to Athlone is part and parcel or in connection with a direct Line going on towards Roscommon and Castlerea, which is intended to be carried on to Sligo in another Session; and I dare say a good deal of evidence will be given to you to show the expediency of that direct Line. Sir, I think it will not be worth my while to dwell much on the engineering features of either Line, for they are both practicable. Our Line is  $23\frac{3}{4}$  miles long, and involves an expenditure of £160,000, and is a single Line. The Line from Portarlinton to Tullamore has been made

at present as a single line : that is to say, a single line of rails has been laid down on it, the bridges being all made with a view to a double Line hereafter, and land purchased of a sufficient width to make a double Line; and it is proposed to make this on the same principle.

Now, Sir, let me for one moment consider which is the proper junction between these two systems. Supposing I was to leave the question without any observation, and the Committee were to decide it on the map, and from their knowledge of what Athlone is: I do not think they would have any difficulty in coming to an immediate decision, in accordance with the decision of the House of Lords in 1846, that the junction between those two Lines obviously ought to take place at Athlone. I do not think there would be really any doubt about it. I dare say it is known to the Chairman and to the honourable Members in the Committee that Athlone is one of the most important towns in Ireland. In a military point of view it is the most important; there is not a town, I am told—and we shall bring before you military evidence of the highest description to show it—equal to it. Athlone is about the most important military station in Ireland, being situated on the Shannon, and being in the centre of Ireland; and it is desirable, and almost essential, that military stations should be brought into continuous Railway connection with one another. Every witness who will be called before you will deprecate any change of carriage or system in passing from one dépôt to the other. In giving facilities for the conveyance of troops, the most important thing for them is to have one Line in the most direct course and under one management, and I have had prepared a map showing to you all the different military dépôts in Ireland which will be brought by our Line in connection with Athlone. If this Line be made, Sir, you will find it will give an immediate and direct connection with Newbridge, in the county of

Kildare. That is an important post ; it will give access to Parsonstown, to Carlow, where there is another station, to Kilkenny, to Templemore, to Clonmel, to Limerick, and to the Curragh. It will also give access to Buttevant, to Fermoy, and to Cork. The filling up of this little gap of  $23\frac{1}{2}$  miles will have for military purposes the effect at once of opening the most direct and continuous communication between all those military stations which I have mentioned and Athlone, which is the most important of all the military stations, a great dépôt for ordnance, a place where there are extensive barracks, a number of troops, and with which there is constant intercommunication. I think the evidence you will hear on that point will be wellnigh conclusive as to the importance of this Line in a military point of view.

Now, Sir, let us take it in an agricultural point of view. There you will say rapidity of access is of less importance ; still it is of considerable importance, for we shall show you by evidence that Ireland is a great breeding country for cattle, and a great fattening country ; it supplies England to a great extent, and a large amount of provisions are sold at Cork. We shall call before you agricultural witnesses, and one of the largest contractors from Cork, to speak to the facts to which I am now going to draw your attention. All this country—Tipperary, and round Limerick, and districts approached by the Great Southern and Western Railway—are dairy countries, where calves are bred in great numbers, and reared to a certain extent, only. The habit is, when those arrive at a certain age, to send them to Roscommon to be reared, though not finally fattened. They are bred in Tipperary, Limerick, and that neighbourhood ; they are then sent to Roscommon, allowed to attain two or three years of age, then they are brought back again into these fattening districts for the sake of being fatted before they are sold. I should also state there are fattening districts at Meath, on the

Midland Line, and there is no reason they should not take cattle there; but what we wish is, to have the carriage of cattle passing from Athlone in the direction of our Line, and which pass to Cork, one of the largest ports at which provisions are supplied. It is also the largest port at which the embarkation of troops takes place, and our Line will give the most direct communication between Athlone and the port of Cork.

Then I am told there is an immense quantity of potatoes and corn which finds its way in this southern direction, and it is of great importance in an agricultural point of view that this should have the most direct access in that direction. I will not weary you with details on this subject, because they will be better given by the witnesses. Still, I beg you to bear in mind, that on all these three points, viz. with reference to the military defence of the country, and the agricultural interest of the country, combining both corn and cattle, we afford the most direct access that can be afforded between the whole of the south of Ireland and the counties of Galway and Roscommon; and we shall bring before you evidence of the most respectable character to show that the formation of our Line is extremely desirable to those interests to which I have referred.

Sir, I have stated to you why Athlone appears to me to be of all others the point for a junction.

Athlone is a town of considerable importance, and Athlone ought to have a voice in this matter. If Athlone stood alone, without any Roscommon behind it, or Galway, an inhabitant would be entitled to say: If I want to go to Cork, do not carry me round to Streamstown. Why should not Athlone have direct access to Tullamore? Is it a sufficient answer to say, Because the Midland are afraid of competition? You have a Petition, signed, I believe, by the great bulk of the population of Athlone, in favour of this Line. You have



also a petition from Tullamore to the same effect, and various Petitions from other districts, to which I will refer by and by; but from those two towns most directly interested, viz. Tullamore and Athlone, you have Petitions emanating from the bulk of the inhabitants of both, saying, If a railway is to be made, let us have one in the most direct course.

Such being the interests of Athlone, I will ask you to consider for a moment what are the advantages presented by Streamstown. Streamstown, in the evidence laid before me, is described as a flag station—a station at which there is no town, and no population at all. It is a station—and that is all that can be said of it—on the Midland Great Western Railway of Ireland. It is merely a spot selected by the Midland Great Western for the purpose of making a Line from thence to Tullamore, with a view to procure the rejection of a Line from Tullamore to Athlone, and to give them the control of the whole of the traffic.

Now the Line as attempted to be set up by them is represented also as a North and South Line; they say the Line promoted by the Great Southern and Western, going only from Tullamore to Athlone in that direction, gives an access it is true—the best access—to the West, and they do not deny it; but it gives no access to the North. But the traffic to the North is of far less importance than the traffic to the West, as we shall show you. The traffic of the principal towns to the North, such as Belfast, Armagh, and those towns, finds its way to the South through Dublin. The traffic to the West clearly requires the shortest Line that can be laid down for the purpose of accommodating it, but in the Petition which they lay before you the Midland Great Western Company reveal what is their real object in promoting the Line from Streamstown. They state in their Petition their objection to be, that our Line may establish a competition with them for the traffic of

Galway! Sir, I do not deny it may, but, inasmuch as that Company is largely competing already with the Great Southern and Western, I do not see that the public would be much damaged by it. It would be difficult to conceive that the public would be damaged by having two Lines between Dublin and Athlone, and I do not know what vested rights the Midland Company have in preventing the public having two means of getting to Athlone instead of one, when the additional Line will give them also the best means of getting to the South.

Now look at the way in which the Midland Line would be worked. When you compare those two Lines and the mode in which they will be worked with a view to access to the South, you have by us a direct Line to Athlone, where there is already an important station—a station where the whole of the trains of the Midland Railway to and fro stop and interchange; it is the point of stopping they make themselves. The trains up and down meet at Athlone; it is the most convenient point at which, for the conduct of the traffic, a junction can take place. Our traffic would go there, if intended for the town of Galway; it would then get into the Midland Great Western carriage, and go to its destination. Our traffic coming from Roscommon to the South would come continuously to Athlone, and then go on by our Line to Tullamore, and so to the South, without change of carriage, by arrangement between the two Companies. But now let us see how the traffic by the Line to Streamstown would go.

You cannot look at the Map without being satisfied that the main traffic of the Midlands will always be in the direction of Dublin, Athlone, and Galway. Then let us suppose the traffic is desirous of going from Carlow or any other place on the Great Southern and Western Line to Athlone or to Galway. I have shown you how it would go

directly by ours. How would it go by theirs? First, it would go by the Great Southern and Western to Tullamore; it would have there either to change carriages or to change the system to get on to the Midland system, instead of going on continuously to Athlone. And what then? It would be taken to Streamstown; but how would it be taken on to Athlone? Certainly not, directly; it would be made subservient to the traffic going between Dublin and Galway and Athlone, and there can be no doubt a traveller wanting to go from Carlow to Athlone would be taken to Tullamore, have to wait for a Midland train at Tullamore, go to Streamstown, and there wait for a train coming from Dublin to Athlone before he would be taken on: there would be those two breaks instead of going direct by our Line. In the same manner the traffic coming from the North would be similarly treated.

They state, Sir, that the Streamstown Line is more desirable than ours, because it would give a communication north and south. Let us take a passenger going from Cavan to the South; how would he be treated? At Mullingar he would wait for a Dublin train to take him to Streamstown; there he would have to wait for another carriage to take him to Tullamore, and there have to wait for another carriage to take him on. The inconvenience of that will at once strike you, and therefore you cannot shut your eyes to the certain fact, that the sole object of the Midland Company in promoting that Line is, as I have said, as a block line to give them a key to the whole of the traffic. They say, We object to the Line from Tullamore to Athlone because it may abstract traffic from us; give us therefore the Line from Tullamore to Streamstown, because by its means we shall keep the key of the whole of that traffic in our hands; we shall conduct it as we please, and take the public in the mode I have described, by transferring them first from one

carriage or from one system to another, instead of allowing them to go direct by the Great Southern and Western.

Then, Sir, it was contended here on the last occasion, and may be again, that it is important to carry flax from the South of Ireland to the North, to the manufacturers there. It will be shown to you, however, that little flax is grown in the South at all, and there is little traffic between North and South in the way they go in comparison with that which takes place between the West and South. The main traffic from North to South is on the east coast of Ireland, accommodated by the Belfast and other Railways, all of which run through Dublin.

I will now just refer to this Petition to show you I have not misstated the facts [*the learned Counsel here read an extract from the Petition of the Midland Company complaining of the junction proposed with their line at Athlone*]. And here allow me to state, that the proposal for our Line is that we have a station of our own on one side of the Shannon, and that we should have power to go on to theirs simply for the purpose of the continuous traffic going farther; that we should cross the bridge they have, enter their station, and have access to it, because in that station will take place the interchange of traffic going to the West. You will have to consider the propriety of that. Then they go on [*the learned Counsel here read down to the end of the Petition complaining of competition*].

That, Sir, is the purport of the Petition of the Midland Company; and it is remarkable that this Company, who now complain of competition by us, in 1854, when two Lines of Railway were promoted in the North of Ireland, they having an interest in favour of one, presented a Petition to Parliament in favour of that Line, in which Petition is the following paragraph, viz. "that the junction with the Belfast and West of Ireland would give an independent communi-

" cation between Londonderry and the West of Ireland and  
 " North of Dublin, which would enable the public to choose  
 " between two competing Lines, affording nearly the same  
 " facilities of transit, whereas the other would practically  
 " leave the public no choice of route." So that this very  
 Company who are now complaining of our Line, because it  
 will establish a competition, in 1854, when opposing one  
 Railway and supporting another, advocated that very com-  
 petition, because it would give the public the choice of two  
 routes instead of one! The parties instructing me have had  
 prepared the coloured map on the wall, which is an apt  
 illustration of what the competition is between the Midland  
 and Great Southern and Western Companies. The part  
 coloured yellow represents the Midland Great Western; the  
 part coloured exclusively pink represents the Great Southern  
 and Western; the part crossed with red cross lines over the  
 yellow represents the water communication of the Midland  
 Railway Company, whereby they compete with the Great  
 Southern and Western; and you will see by that map that  
 whereas the Great Southern and Western does not extend  
 in the slightest degree into the yellow district of the Midland  
 Great Western, and only seeks to the extent of that little  
 red dotted line to get to Athlone, the latter possess competing  
 Lines of Canal, which extend through the whole of the Great  
 Southern and Western district, running down to Waterford  
 in one direction, and Limerick on the other. If, therefore,  
 any parties are aggrieved by competition in the present state  
 of things, it is the Great Southern and Western Railway of  
 Ireland; and, although we do not seek this Line for the  
 purposes of competition, I do say it does not lie in the  
 mouth of the Midland Company to complain of that com-  
 petition when they are the parties carrying it on to such an  
 extent, as they do, against the Great Southern and Western  
 Company.



Sir, this question must be decided by you, and I have no doubt it will not be decided with reference to the interests of these two Companies, but with reference to the interest of the public at large. You will have brought before you evidence comprising, I believe, the very first military authorities, the evidence of the leading gentry of the district, evidence of the agricultural interests, evidence of commercial interests, all combining and joining in the same opinion as to the desirability of having the Great Southern and Western Line made instead of the Line to Streamstown, which they say will be useless to them. You have also on the Table, or, if not on the Table, you have presented to the House, twenty Petitions in favour of the Great Southern and Western Bill, each Petition emanating from districts which in reality have the greatest interest in the question at issue. The Committee cannot altogether disregard Petitions of that kind when they see how numerous and respectably they are signed, and that the other parties fail to obtain Petitions from the same localities in favour of their Line. The Committee, I am sure, will give weight to the wishes of the parties most interested when they ask you to pass our Line. Those Petitions emanate from owners, lessees, and occupiers of land, and you have one also from inhabitants and merchants of Tullamore, signed by a great many people. You have also a Petition from Athlone, largely signed; you have Petitions from the Town Commissioners of Athlone, the Commissioners for Improvement of the Town—they are a public body, and sign as such; you have a Petition from the inhabitants of the town and county of Roscommon in favour of the Bill; you have a Petition from the town of Galway; from the Town Commissioners of Galway—a public body too; a like Petition from Tuam; you have a Petition from the Harbour Commissioners of Galway—a public body; and one from the Poor Law Guardians of

Galway—all praying for the Bill. Those public bodies comprise the bulk of all the respectable inhabitants of those districts; and I would ask you for a moment to weigh in your consideration the interests of those parties as compared with the interest of the Midland Company, and to consider whether the parties I have mentioned have not a much greater claim to ask for the formation of this Line, than the Midland Company have to ask for its rejection in favour of the Streamstown Line. The Petitions I have referred to all pray for the formation of our Line; and you have the like Petitions from a variety of other places, which I need not particularise, signed by the Boards of Guardians in those places. Then there is another Petition—I do not know that I need refer to it, indeed I will not, as it is rather a personal Petition. All those Petitioners must be uninterested in the question in a pecuniary point of view as shareholders, but they are deeply interested as parties living in the locality, desirous to have the best communication.

Now Sir, I have not the least doubt in my own mind that even if this Bill should be rejected by the Committee, which I trust it will not be, and if the Streamstown Line should be passed in preference to it, that some day or another others would take this Line up. You cannot for a moment believe that such large interests as are involved in this question will allow themselves to be deprived of the most direct communication between Tullamore and Athlone, and be carried six or seven miles out of their road, and handed over to two Lines of Railway under different managements. Even should, therefore, the legislation of this year terminate by a rejection of our Line, I firmly believe the gentlemen promoting the Roscommon Line would even use the Streamstown Line for going south, but you would have the question renewed in another Session in the shape of a Bill promoted by independent parties for filling up the gap

between Athlone and Tullamore: I cannot doubt it. I therefore sincerely hope that this Line will receive your sanction in preference to the other. On the other hand, although I am not instructed to say so by my clients, it does appear to me on looking at the two cases, that if by any possibility the Midland Company were to prove the case of a north and south traffic, requiring a Line in a direction north and south, there would be no material objection to the formation of it; if the Line from Tullamore to Athlone be given to us, the other Line would not damage us much, and if it should benefit the public, the Great Southern and Western Company will not stand in the way of the public; but, in dealing with the question as a north and south communication only, I shall beg the Committee to consider whether a Line (which I shall prove to be practicable) between Mullingar and Portarlinton would not be the proper course to pursue. It is a perfectly easy Line; and if there be any truth in the Case of the Midland Company, that access is desirable through the centre of Ireland from north to south, there can be no question that the proper line would be from Mullingar to Portarlinton, and not from Streamstown to Tullamore. That question you will have to deal with hereafter. As I before stated, I am not objecting to the formation of any Line to the North. What I am desirous of getting is the best Line from the West to the South. The main object the other side have is monopoly. There can be no doubt about that. The object we have is the reverse. We desire no monopoly, and we cannot have it even if we desired it. If we make our Line from Tullamore to Athlone, it must be a Line to be competed with. We seek therefore no monopoly; but it is the sole object of the other Company; and I find in a speech of their Chairman, Mr. Ennis, that they talk of their having vested rights which give them a claim to the consideration of the Legislature in securing to them a monopoly. We have so often dealt with the same question

in Committees here, that I need not use any argument against the existence of any such vested rights. They will have no doubt their vested rights protected so far as they are consistent with public necessity and convenience; but, if we can show you that the possession of these rights is not beneficial to the interests of the public, it will not be for a Committee of the House of Commons to maintain them for one hour.

I have before me the speech, which I am desired to refer to, of the Chairman of the Midland Company at a meeting of the shareholders, held on the 25th of May last, with reference to these projects, and he says, "Unquestionably it is of importance, that the Railways of the two Companies, the Great Southern and Western and this Company, should be united." That is an admission which may be implied in the prosecution of the Bill. "The public seem to claim it as an advantage, and we are willing to adopt that opinion. The only question is, where is the Junction to be made? We are willing to adopt the principle that every accommodation consistent with the interests of the proprietors of the Company shall be given to the public. Some may probably say that the interests of the proprietors are paramount. I am not one of those who think so. I think that a great trust is reposed in us for the benefit of the public in the first instance, and it is by keeping in view the interests of the public that we shall most undoubtedly contribute to our own. Instead of permitting the Great Southern Company to join our Line at Athlone, we propose that the public shall have the accommodation to be derived from a connection, but in a manner compatible with our vested interests. From the object mooted by our Kingsbridge friends, it follows, as a matter of course, that Athlone and all the country behind it will have two modes of reaching Dublin. It never could be the intention of the Legislature to promote such a state of things, which would terminate

" in opposition, leaving the public worse off in the end.  
 " We, therefore, propose, with your consent, to make the  
 " Line to which I have adverted. It may be expected from  
 " me that I would enter into a detail of the transactions  
 " between the two Companies; it probably will be expected  
 " that I would defend the position which the Directors have  
 " assumed, and insomuch protect them from the aspersions  
 " that have been cast upon them of doing things which they  
 " should not have done. I do not think it is necessary at  
 " the present moment to enter into the subject in detail, but  
 " I think it will not be trespassing to state that, at the outset  
 " of the present disturbances (if I may so call them) between  
 " the Companies, the usual letter was addressed to us, inviting  
 " us to suspend operations in the House of Commons during  
 " the last Session of Parliament. We might have willingly  
 " committed ourselves to such an arrangement, and you will  
 " ask why we did not do so: why rush into a parliamentary  
 " contest after such a reasonable offer having been made to  
 " us? My answer is, as another Company, projected by  
 " gentlemen in the West of Ireland, proposed originally to  
 " construct a line from Tullamore to Sligo, we could not  
 " permit such a Company to do that which we would not  
 " allow the Great Southern Company to do, and because  
 " we felt it necessary to protect ourselves from inroad by  
 " another Company, the Great Southern Company turns  
 " round on us and says, 'You break faith with us.' 'No,'  
 " we said, 'if those new companies coming into the market  
 " will drop that portion of their Bill which affects us, we  
 " certainly will not be the first to enter into the contest with  
 " you.' This they refused; we therefore had no course left  
 " but to protect ourselves, and I believe the time has now  
 " arrived when the great question that has been agitated so  
 " long should be settled one way or the other. We have  
 " the merits with us. The result of the contest will be to

“rectify the difficulty that exists between us. Give us our Junction at Streamstown, and save the vested rights of the Company.”

You will not fail to see by that speech that the Bill of the Midland Company is promoted, not for the purpose of effecting any great public object, but for the protection of the so-called assumed vested rights of that Company. They must, I am satisfied, make out a strong case before this Committee to induce you to pass their Bill, carrying the public upwards of six miles round to Athlone merely to protect their own interests. You will consider the public interest as paramount, and I have not the slightest hesitation in believing, that when you have heard all the evidence we shall bring forward, you will give your preference to the Tullamore and Athlone Line.

The following witnesses were then examined :—

His Royal Highness the DUKE of CAMBRIDGE.

The MARQUIS of SLIGO.

The EARL of LUCAN.

LORD CROFTON.

LORD CLONCURRY.

MAJOR-GENERAL MANSEL.

MAJOR-GENERAL OLDFIELD.

W. H. GREGORY, Esq., M.P.

DENIS KIRWAN, Esq., D.L.

COL. DUNNE.

A number of other Landed Proprietors and several Mercantile and Commercial men, Farmers, &c., also gave evidence in favour of the Bill.

*Mercurii, 17<sup>o</sup> die Junii, 1857.*

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Mr. HOPE SCOTT.—SIR, It now devolves on me to reply on the whole case on behalf of the Great Southern and Western Railway Company, whom I represent, and in so doing I will take the liberty of calling your attention to the Map, not those harlequin Maps which are on the lower part of the wall, and which are brought here with the colours, and with the intentions of that famous gentleman on the stage, but this Map, which gives a somewhat more reasonable view of the country. You will see in the Railway system of Ireland, what may be called an excluded and isolated district; the district of the north-west, including the counties of Mayo, Sligo, and Roscommon, which are surrounded on two sides, hemmed in by the Midland Great Western Company's Lines, to which that Company is good enough to assert claims of a proprietary character; and in regard to which that Company has as yet done nothing in the way of duty towards its property. There is no doubt that they have proposed a Line to Sligo; and you have heard in evidence, they have broken faith in the opinion of Lord Clancarty, as to a Line to Tuam; but as yet with their Line constructed from Cavan northward, to Mullingar southward, and towards Galway, they have made slight progress in serving that district, and as regards Tuam, have omitted to do it altogether. But even if they had been



of the course of the Shannon, a point in which all traffic in the original case of water-communication must converge, and with the addition of the Railway, showing that Railway communication must of necessity more or less converge to that point; its nature in that respect has been, as you are aware, fully apprised by the military authorities.

For military purposes you have the evidence of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, to which evidence I desire to give the tribute to which it is most justly due: that, not only of a royal duke, and a commander of the forces, but of a clear-headed, sensible, practical man, perfectly master of his business; that evidence, I say, established beyond doubt, that the military authorities of Ireland have recognised its position, and when you speak of military, what do you mean as regards commerce? What do you want for military purposes? You want facilities of transport, of exchange, of concentration. What do you want in trade? The same elements; transport not of troops and stores, but of merchandise; exchange not of regiments, but of valuable produce; concentration not of large stores and arsenals of arms, but concentration of traffic and the creation of markets. I am going to say that, in the history of Ireland the military element for many years had more public notice than the commerce; we hope now that the public traffic is of a more profitable, though of a less excitable kind; and, guided by the experience which the military authorities, afford us in the way of moving the bodies over which they have charge; we have reason to believe Athlone will be for commercial purposes what it has hitherto been for the military purposes of the country.

The military usage, however, must still remain; the question of internal disturbances, of protection against the enemy from without, are not to be overlooked; still the question of communication there should be what will most effectually combine the interests of the military as well as the commercial portion of the country. On this point the

Duke of Cambridge's evidence is clear. He had before him a Map, on which all the different stations are marked; he went over them one by one, as requested by Mr. Alexander in cross-examination, and the result of his evidence is this, as far as north and south communication are concerned:—Dublin is the route of the greatest importance to the Government as far as a question of concentration and centralisation is concerned; a communication between Athlone, Tullamore, and the garrisons to the south is the first point to which a military man will look.

I do not refer to his evidence, because I am sure it will be fresh in your mind. His answers are few, and so clear that they cannot be mistaken. He is supported in his view by Major-General Mansell and Major-General Oldfield. He is met in contradiction by Mr. Forbes, a traffic-manager, who produces a certain return of the movements of troops, which, when examined from the north and south communications, is what His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge described, a coast-communication, and there was no central communication such as would take advantage of Streamstown or even Mullingar to be found in any one of the tables or calculations he produced.

Passing then from the military point of view, let us see what the evidence is. We know the condition of Belfast, its wants, and how it is supplied. As a manufacturing place, it feeds its mills from the neighbourhood round it with flax. As a manufacturing place, it feeds its population with the produce of the south; but for all that produce it has obtained communication already as far as Dublin; it is broken at Dublin, capable of being connected at a slight expense and by a short mode, and therefore as regards commercial communication between the south of Ireland and Belfast, which is the greatest consuming district, there is no doubt that no legislation is required at your hands; least of all

such legislation as this is, which will not give the shortest and most direct mode.

Now the evidence with regard to the communication from north-west and south-east is, in the main, this, that the cattle go to and fro between the lower south-eastern and north-western counties for the purposes of pasture, that Cork being the largest place for the provision trade, it is to that the district looks for its market. It is the place of import of corn, India corn, Baltic corn, and other necessities of life of which Ireland at times runs almost short. Cork is its natural port of export and import, just as Dundalk, Drogheda, and Dublin are the natural ports for the exports and imports of the district, which lies north of the Great Midland Line. When we come to the centre of the country, we have one or two fixed points which will give us some indication of the value of a Line by Streamstown. From Omagh, by Dublin to Portarlington, the distance is  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles longer if you take the route by Dublin. If you take Mullingar, which seems a very fair profitable point for any communication between the north and south, you find the difference between the communication between Mullingar and Portarlington as compared with the communication between Mullingar, Streamstown, Tullamore, and Portarlington, is as 26 miles to 41. Mullingar, moreover, is a town, a military dépôt, Streamstown is a village; and yet, for the sake of a communication to Streamstown, the whole communication is to be dislocated, and you are asked to pass a Bill, which is neither the best Bill for a communication of a central kind north and south, nor a possible or feasible Bill for the purposes of communication between the north-west and south-east, as I say in point of communication and shortness, and no question has been raised as to the facilities the country affords for constructing a Line of Railway between Mullingar and Portarlington; if there is anything in the case made on

the part of the north and south traffic it surely would be worth £30,000 or £40,000 worth of expenditure to accommodate it alone. Yet we are told they will not make their Streamstown Line if we get ours : *à fortiori* must it be plain they are not disposed to make a Line between Mullingar and Portarlinton, and in both cases they produce the north and south traffic, which they set up as a matter of disturbing forces in this room to prevent that which is really needed, the north-west and south-east communication across the country.

That is one of the suggestions ; let us take another. Another is that Parsonstown and Ballinasloe, or Parsonstown and Streamstown, would give what is needed. That is on the supposition that Streamstown and Tullamore are connected, and of these views one seems to be represented by Lord Clancarty, whose interest in Ballinasloe is probably great, the other taken by Mr. Serjeant Wrangham, for a similar purpose to that for which the Streamstown and Tullamore Line is projected, of setting before you, certain consequences to the Midland Great Western, which I shall deal with presently. Take the case of the communication between Parsonstown and Ballinasloe, and you see the result. It is a pity the Duke of Cambridge was not asked as to the military convenience of such a Line as that ; it had not been started at that moment. It cuts off the whole of the upper portion of the Great Southern and Western from any facility. It becomes a Cork Line, and a Waterford Line, but it ceases to be a Kildare, Carlow, Kilkenny, or Wexford Line for any purpose whatever. It is put forth on the same principle of diversion of that which is the proper route, as the Streamstown branch is put forward in a different direction ; but, having the same objects and reasons, the prevention of Athlone receiving the further developement of which it is capable, and giving Ballinasloe an

advantage which Lord Clancarty is perfectly entitled to take if he can get it, then Mr. Serjeant Wrangham's Line is a new view and qualification of the Midland Great Western case. Be it that Athlone should be supplied, and Athlone may be properly admitted to be a proper and important place for communication ; be it that Athlone is to be taken as we say it is and everybody,—but the Midland Great Western admit it to be a central and important place ; only take it down to Parsonstown, only insist on its not going across to Tullamore. You might run a Line, says my friend, down the banks of the Shannon, competing with it all the way. You must take Athlone traffic down to Parsonstown, then send it back to Portarlinton, then send it round by Kildare, and deliver it at Waterford or Wexford if it wants to go to those places. Another innovation on the real question, another admission that Athlone ought to be the terminus of any new Line going to the South, but coupled with a suggestion that destroys its value, and renders it as useless to the Company as it would be innocuous to any fears entertained by the Midland Great Western. The truth is, the Map is conclusive ; and the only argument which can be adduced against the Map is, that the Midland Great Western have interests which they fear will be injured, — property which will be affected, and which property they say ought to be protected against the public, against the natural course of the traffic, against the wishes of the Government as regards the military communication, against the wishes of the whole producing parts of Ireland ; against all these it must be protected, at whatever risk or hazard, because it is theirs, and they have a vested interest in the country.

Now, that they are monopolists is not denied ; it is a part of their case that they have a monopoly which they do not wish disturbed ; they monopolised the Royal Canal when they first projected their scheme ; they have since acquired

the Grand Canal, and in that way they may be said to have the Shannon in leading strings, only they use the leading strings in somewhat Irish fashion, it is to hold it back, not to lead it forward. They have their Railway to the Shannon, one canal from the Shannon on the north, the other on the south, and both these canals, which are the natural feeders of the Shannon, are in their hands and used for their purposes to force the traffic in a course which will pay them better, namely, on to their Railway between Athlone and Dublin, and while they are monopolists in this, one of the most extensive senses in which I have ever known a Railway Company to be monopolists, they have not forgotten that competition may be a good thing in some cases, and so they have tried it on us. That portion of the Grand Canal which I have mentioned as illustrating the original belief in the necessity of a communication between north-west and south-east, they know to be in competition and capable of injuring our Lines to the south. So that while they are fighting for their lives to keeping us from approaching the Shannon at Athlone, they are competing with us by means of the Shannon at Limerick, Carlow, and even at Tullamore itself, which is the point from which our Line starts.

Therefore, the objects they have in view in this Junction are very plain. The first is to protect their Athlone and Dublin traffic, which they think the construction of a Line only two and a half miles longer between Athlone and Dublin, will put in peril; the second is to prevent an independent entrance into the north-west district of the former, which I do not deny to be in a certain sense legitimate; the latter would amount, if admitted by Parliament, to the surrender of a large district which they do not pretend to accommodate, and which their position will never enable them to do in a full and generous mode.

Now that this Line is laid out for this purpose, I need

hardly say. What they say is, Granted that there should be a Line from the north-west to the south-east, you must give us a centre Line of thirty miles in the middle of it; and, inasmuch as the progress of that Line to the north-west will take you by Athlone, you must moreover interpose that distance from Streamstown to Athlone between us and any Line which is to give a facility of going off to the South; and the result must be this, if their view is to be admitted, that, supposing there to be a Great North-Western system above Athlone, and a Great Southern and Western system below Athlone, the communication between these two systems is to be conducted by two branches, so that with the absolute necessities of the intervening Main Line traffic between Dublin and Galway, and the inconvenience necessarily resulting from Branch traffic between Streamstown and Tullamore, and between Tullamore and Portarlinton, for that would be a Branch nearly also, the utmost possible obstruction may be given to traffic arrangements. I do not speak of it in the sense of putting trams across the rails, or any gross interference, because what is called Mr. Cardwell's Act will prevent that, but obstruction arising from inconveniences justifiable under the Act, because connected with the proper working of their Main Line and the system connected with it. Supposing any such difficulties as these were to arise, that a man coming from Ballyna or West Port, were to come to Tullamore in a great hurry to go to Kildare or Naas, and he was told the Midland Great Western Express, between Galway and Dublin was twenty minutes behind time, and that the Line must be kept clear until that was got right off; you would not blame the Midland Company, it is their express, it is the most important train passing through Ireland at that moment. Mr. Cardwell's Act could not apply to them; but what is the result? The passenger from Ballyna or West



Port, who is in a hurry to get to Kildare, must stop at Athlone or Streamstown, whatever the place may be, until the express is through. He may lose all his trains. So will it be if he is going from Tullamore by Portarlington, and so on; but you cannot put that case, for this plain and single reason, that no Court would deal so harshly with the interest of the Midland Great Western, and the public using that Line, as to say, that a cross-traffic in which they have comparatively little interest, and which is not so great in account or importance as the main traffic, ought to be postponed to it.

Again, take the case of working the Branch. The passenger will be put out at Streamstown. They are not likely to stop any train of particular importance, or to detach carriages; but suppose they do, they must be taken off at Streamstown, handed over to the Branch between Streamstown and Tullamore; again, at Tullamore, fall into another system on a branch, the whole working of which must depend on the time occupied in coming from Streamstown to Tullamore, and which, when it reaches Portarlington, will have to be dependent on the more important traffic of the Main Line. A through Line, in any sense of the word, and the Streamstown traffic is incompatible. I address, in you, a chairman who is familiar with these things. Do you believe a through communication, in the real sense of the word, could be afforded by means of the experiment such as is proposed? Take on the other hand our system. A passenger from Cork would have the benefit to Portarlington of the full traffic going towards Dublin. At Portarlington he will meet with traffic coming from Wexford, Waterford, and other places to the north west. He would be passed on, the extent of the Line from Portarlington, Castlebar, and the west would be sufficient to justify a stoppage of the main

train at Portarlington. The train would be divided there; one engine would be there, the other would go into Dublin: and you would have for the north-west a system equal in punctuality to that afforded to Dublin and Cork. Without a junction of the two Lines at Athlone, coming from the South and going to the North, that system is impossible. On the Map it appears a question of geographical distance; when you are in a Railway carriage it is a question of time, dependent on identity of interest, streams of traffic, and combinations of trade. There is no man can say you can work a through system over an East and West Line for thirty miles and make it subservient to a different course of traffic, namely, one to the north-west and south-east.

But now observe another point. On the supposition that the Streamstown Line is made, you may still treat it as certain that a communication will be made in the neighbourhood of Dublin; that the North and South Lines which meet at Dublin, but are separated, will sooner or later have a communication near Maynooth or Lucan. It may be taken as almost axiomatic. What would be the interest of the Streamstown and Midland Great Western under these circumstances? Granted the traffic was fairly treated at Streamstown, as fairly as the circumstances of the case would admit, what would be the interest of the Midland Great Western if they had the command of the Line between Streamstown and Tullamore, and there should be another Line made between Lucan and Maynooth between the two systems? Do you think it likely, or in accordance with the general view of Railway directors—very much abused men, but only doing on a larger scale what other people do on a smaller one—do you think it would be in accordance with the general view of

Railway directors to let traffic off the Midland Great Western at Streamstown if there was a reasonable chance of carrying it on to Maynooth ; if they had the command of the junction at Streamstown it is clear that the junction at Maynooth would be a disadvantage to the East and West in exact proportion as it is beneficial to the North and South. They would have the command of the Line between Athlone and Streamstown, they could offer a comparatively rapid passage as far as Maynooth to the branch there, and it would soon be a question of option which the public would settle whether they had not better submit to go the longer distance and pay the larger fare than get out at Streamstown in the teeth of that Company and submit to all the inconveniences which will attend the carrying out of any plan such as I allude to.

Then I think I may assume, if you make a through communication between Portarlinton and places lying to the south and east of Portarlinton, you must take the line through Athlone. And what has been the view of the Great Northern and Western Company—a Company whose scheme has originated in local districts, essentially the line of the country gentlemen wholly independent of us. Their engineer has laid out the same Line between Athlone and Tullamore. Athlone as the necessary point of starting for that district, and Tullamore as the only fit and proper mode of bringing the through communication into play, which is their object essentially.

Now what are we met with? We are met with the cry of protection of their interest. We are met with the cry, and I do not undervalue the cry when properly uttered and in the right tone, that competition has been tried and has proved ineffectual and involving a large expenditure of capital, it has become burdensome to the country and injurious to the vested interests of parties. I admit the prin-

ciple as stated to be true. But there are two kinds of competition. There is competition for itself, and there is competition incidental to another and distinct object. Competition for itself cannot be too much condemned by Parliament, and I only wish Parliament had taken the view which it is much disposed to do now. The Railway property of England would have been double its value, the accommodation to the country at large much greater, the service better, more punctual, more liberal, and in all respects a preferable thing; but Parliament has not thought fit to pursue that policy. Even those who are most against competition, from point to point, and adverse to any competition in the construction of Lines, have been always most ready to allow the existence of competition of an incidental kind, as being no bar to the construction of Lines which are themselves proper. I may state it in propositions. You ought not to make Lines because they simply compete; you ought not to deny them because competition arises out of some other, and consequently reasonable and favourable consideration to the public, which is involved in the construction of the Line. Where you make Lines to compete you double your capital, when it ceases you have a double burden cast on the country, producing the same result as only one capital. When you have a Line laid out for a purpose, in itself substantial, and for the moment let me suppose there was no line between Dublin and Galway, who would say there should not be a Line to Athlone? Who would say it is not valuable? When you come to a Line which must be valuable under such circumstances; will you turn the tables, and reduce the proposition of competition to an absolute absurdity; you run from one extreme to the other; whereas at one time all the world is bent on competition, you will be put in the position of saying we will not give

the accommodation because some slight competition may arise out of it. There are excesses on both sides, and that would be quite as unreasonable as the previous one; and I am sure, if the Committee are satisfied the Line is one which on other grounds ought to be made, the existence of an incidental and limited competition will not induce them to refuse to the public and to the Great Southern and Western that which is a proper and legitimate developement of the accommodation they can afford to the public.

Now, Sir, as regards the competition and its extent, they are anxious you should believe that the competition would extend to Galway—how it is to do so passes my comprehension; but if it extends to Galway from Athlone, surely it will extend to Galway from Tullamore; they own the Line between Athlone and Galway just the same as they would own the Line between Tullamore and Streamstown—Athlone and Galway—so that if their case is good against our Line, that we should abstract Galway traffic from them or any traffic which has not to come over their Line in the first instance, it is equally true we are in the same position at Tullamore to produce the same effect. We know that is a wild way of talking. Masters of the collection of traffic at Galway, and its managers down to Athlone, there must be bad management if they allow an ounce or a child to get off their Line. The thing is impossible. But let me say one thing on this part of the case. We have none of the baronies who guarantee the Galway Line Petitioners against this Bill. There seems to be no apprehension of their security being affected. They are not in the least degree alarmed at the prospect of the Galway traffic being abstracted; and when the Midland Great Western tell you their whole undertaking is pledged for the Government advances, I must remind the Committee it is pledged exclusively for the Line between Athlone and Galway, whose traffic cannot be affected, and they have pledged no interest, dividends, profits, or property

in regard to their Line between Galway and Athlone, which is the only point at which the competition can arise.

With regard to the district beyond and their claims on it, such as is put on the many coloured maps before you, it is ridiculous. If you are in the simple station of a Railway Company situated as that is from east to west, with a short spur to the north-west, turn your eyes, if you can, in thought, for I have not such a map, before you, to the Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, which traverses the country from east to west, and you would for that country be able to claim the whole of my unhappy country of Scotland, and a large part of England besides. They have found it profitable to make an East and West Line, but not another. It is not to Dublin the traffic is to go or from, Dublin it is to be sent; it is because the communication depends on Southern Lines, on South Eastern Lines, that they could not get it, and, not having been able to do it, and not finding their profit, they have left as it were a relic to be taken up by the first comer. My own conviction is that, if it were not that we come to Athlone, they would be willing that we should take the whole of that North-Western system on ourselves, they being secured in one object, which is to keep their monopoly on the banks of the Shannon in Athlone itself, while they are competing with us on the lower part of the system, and bringing us to terms if they can, by the simple act of oppression, owing to an arrangement sanctioned by law, certainly, but actually contrary to the policy of Parliament, which sanctioned that law. I shall come presently to comment on these different transactions; but let me say a word more on this Line. Supposing we had not projected it, it would still have been before you. We hear from the correspondence which has been read, and to which I will avert briefly, that the Tullamore and Streamstown Line was put out by the Midland Great Western, not against any scheme of ours, but a scheme of the Great Northern and Western. That

Company has withdrawn their Line between Athlone and Tullamore on the understanding that we shall occupy that district. If we had not, you would have had the same question to try. You would have had to try it, without a reference to any question of canal or negotiation with the Midland Great Western; you would have had to judge it on the pure public policy of Railways; and I ask you whether you will allow any consideration arising out of negotiations to affect the consideration of a question which, if we had not stepped on to make the Line, would have been raised before you by other Companies, and required decision at your hands for them instead of for us.

Now we have had great charges of dishonesty made against us. I suppose this dishonesty applies to our conduct. Certain it is they do not apply it to the Line. The Line is the Line of the Great Northern and Western as well as our own; and, if it is a question of honesty as regards the Lines themselves, it is a simple test. We are willing to undertake the construction of our Line, although theirs be granted; and you have it from Mr. Sergeant Wrangham if you grant theirs as well as ours they certainly will not undertake to make their Line. Which is the better Line of the two—the one which for north-western and south-eastern traffic defies any scheme which they can bring against us; or the Line which, professing to supply the same object, with an additional one, is afraid to meet its competitor in the field to stand the test of experience as a means of accommodating the district?

Let me turn from the character of the Line to the character and conduct of the parties who are to make it. That was largely impugned by Mr. Serjeant Wrangham; but, as hard words do not break bones, we have acquiesced with tolerable complacency, knowing the time would come when we should be able to clear it up. I refer to a few passages

in the correspondence between us, and I introduce you first to a letter of the 25th of August, 1854, which explains as long ago as that period, and just after the rejection of the lines in that year, the view we took of the question. It is signed by the chairman Sir Edward McDonnell, and addressed to this chairman and directors. It is page 28. "In acknowledging the receipt of your letter of yesterday's date we beg to express our cordial concurrence with you that the differences between the two Companies should be amicably settled, and to add with as much expedition as the importance of the subject demands; we therefore do not delay communicating our opinion on the matter; one difficulty is removed by the admission that a union of the two Lines is required, but this board cannot agree with you that such junction is required to accommodate the public traffic North and South even more than between the West and South, and for these reasons." Then the reasons as given, which are substantially the reasons given in evidence before you. I am now on the question of conduct, and passing to page 29 :—"Should you persevere in the opinion you expressed in your letter, this board, still further to shew their desire to settle all differences amicably, submit the following proposition to you to leave the selection of the place of junction, the Company who shall make it, and the proportion which each Company should have of the Grand Canal, and the terms upon which it should be held, to the decision of the Board of Trade, or to three arbitrators, one to be named by your Company, one by ours, and an umpire chosen by the Board of Trade, such arbitrators and umpire to be of similar station and rank to the noblemen or gentlemen who lately awarded between two Railway Companies in England." I suppose Mr. Gladstone is there referred to "in order to afford ample time for such reference, neither Company to apply to Parliament in



“the next Session for a Bill or Bills relating to the subject  
 “of the reference unless for the purpose of legalising any  
 “award that may be made by the arbitrators.” Here you  
 see we are willing to leave to the Board of Trade, or any gentle-  
 man of station, character, and competency, the whole question  
 between us, to leave the selection of the place of junction,  
 the Company who shall make it, the proportion of each  
 Company of the Grand Canal, and the terms in which it  
 shall be held—in short, the whole question both public and  
 private in the sense of a Company’s interest to be settled by  
 arbitration—an arbitration which would long since have  
 disposed of the question, if it had been adopted, but which  
 the Midland and Great Western have not adopted, saying  
 in their reply simply “they do not think these matters  
 “proper to such a tribunal.” I pass on to other evidence  
 of their conduct on the subject, page 33, in a letter of the  
 20th of September, 1854 :—“We have to acknowledge the  
 “receipt of your Chairman’s letter of the 16th instant,  
 “and cannot avoid expressing our surprise that, instead  
 “of boldly meeting the points at issue between the  
 “two Companies, you lay hold of some casual ex-  
 “pressions which you say were made use of by some  
 “members of our deputation, but the correctness of  
 “which they do not admit. This is a matter, how-  
 “ever, of small importance. Your chairman produced a  
 “written document, with the contents of which your depu-  
 “tation concurred, in which the broad principle was laid  
 “down, that you neither negotiate nor arbitrate on any  
 “matter connected with the Grand Canal, or on any other  
 “matter which might be in dispute between the two Com-  
 “panies, unless we admitted, as preliminary thereto, that  
 “you were entitled to make the junction with our Railway  
 “at any point you pleased west of Mullingar,—say Streams-  
 “town, without any let or hindrance on our part. This being

“ conceded, that you would then be prepared to arbitrate as  
 “ to whether we might have control over such portions of  
 “ the Grand Canal as properly belongs to your district. We  
 “ asked you for a copy of that document, which you refused.  
 “ We beg to remind you that, from the formation of our Com-  
 “ pany, and long before your Railway was thought of, a junction  
 “ with the west at Athlone was always intended by us; that  
 “ this idea has never been abandoned, and that in further-  
 “ ance thereof an Act of Parliament was obtained so long back  
 “ as 1847, and revived and amended in 1852, without oppo-  
 “ sition on your part, for extending our Line from Portar-  
 “ lington to Tullamore, with the avowed intention of pro-  
 “ ceeding to Athlone, which latter extension was sought for in  
 “ the next Session of Parliament, and you now call upon us to  
 “ abandon, without any equivalent, what we have always con-  
 “ sidered as our undoubted right. In the spirit of concilia-  
 “ tion we offered to make the point of junction at Moate :  
 “ you insist on Streamstown, which a Committee of the  
 “ House of Commons has decided is not the proper  
 “ place. Both parties admit that a junction is neces-  
 “ sary; and we say, submit the question to arbitra-  
 “ tion,—where the junction should be, and who should make  
 “ it.” Then, at page 34 : “ We even repeat what our depu-  
 “ tation offered you at our last conference, namely, to sub-  
 “ mit, unreservedly, every matter in dispute between the two  
 “ Companies to arbitration. We considered ourselves fully  
 “ warranted from all previous negotiations between us, in  
 “ requiring that the question to be submitted, relative to the  
 “ Grand Canal, should be the portions to which this Company  
 “ is entitled. We, however, waived that point, and we are now  
 “ willing to refer the whole case, without any reservation what-  
 “ ever.” I might pursue this line of conduct, on their part,  
 through a vast number of these letters; a steady refusal on  
 the part of the Midland Great Western, to give up Streams-

town, as the only point at which the junction could be made, a constant willingness on our part that the matter should be referred to somebody who is capable of judging of it—a proposal from first to last refused, and refused only on one ground, because no indifferent mind could come to a different conclusion from that which we adopted, that Athlone was the place, and that Streamstown was not.

Now, Sir, as to our having by degrees allowed the change of the proposed junction from Athlone to Moate, and from Moate eventually to Streamstown, I have only to say this, that not a single iota of the conduct of the Great Southern and Western can be construed into the slightest admission, that they were wrong in the selection of Athlone; but, worn out and pressed by the competition urged on them, unwilling to go to law to have the main question decided, with prospects of much expense and doubt, they did at one moment concede Streamstown, a concession against their better judgment, and from which, whenever the arrangement was incapable of being proceeded with, they very naturally, and very properly, withdrew. But let me still call your attention to some other passages; one part of the agreement was, that neither party, neither the Great Southern and Western, nor the Midland Great Western, should proceed for Lines in Parliament pending negotiations, and having, as late as the 10th of October, 1856, sent to the Midland Great Western the agreement in ordinary terms for non-promotion of Lines during that Session, we received this answer; it is at page 80: "I beg leave to acknowledge  
 " the receipt of your letter of the 11th instant, a document  
 " similar to that executed by us mutually in the year 1854, by  
 " which it was stipulated that in the then approaching Session  
 " of Parliament, neither the Great Southern and Western  
 " Company nor ours should apply for any Bill to authorise  
 " the Line between the two Railways. I have submitted this

“ communication to our Board, who are of opinion that, inas-  
 “ much as the circumstances of the two periods are different  
 “ in a most essential degree, we cannot now be called on  
 “ reasonably to accede to the request it conveys. The cir-  
 “ cumstances I allude to are these: it is now a matter of  
 “ notoriety that parties of considerable responsibility are  
 “ surveying the district of country between Sligo and Tulla-  
 “ more with a view to the construction of a Railway between  
 “ these termini; while it is equally ascertained that the  
 “ Midland Great Western Company propose to continue  
 “ their Line from Longford to Sligo. We are of opinion  
 “ that on public grounds our proposition will meet with more  
 “ favour in Parliament if along with the facility of inter-  
 “ course which it is intended by it to give between Sligo and  
 “ Dublin, we shall, at the same time, be in a position to  
 “ afford easy access to the south by means of a junction be-  
 “ tween Streamstown and Tullamore. We think that  
 “ no reasons exist in connection with the policy of the  
 “ two Companies why we should be denied freedom of  
 “ action in this matter. The more particularly so as the  
 “ junction in question has already received the formal sanction  
 “ of your Board, and we continue as fully prepared to do all  
 “ in our power to carry out all those requirements which  
 “ relate to the apportionment of the Grand Canal, upon which  
 “ we quite recognise your assent to the Streamstown Junc-  
 “ tion as based.” This is an admission on their part that  
 the concession was made as part of a larger scheme, and  
 reluctantly. We found they were willing enough to postpone  
 the whole question for another Session but for the fact that  
 the Great Northern and Western were in the field; and they  
 proceed to exhibit on the Map, in connection with their  
 Northern Extension, this little green bit, to attract Parlia-  
 ment and make it, because they were going to give the  
 connection between the north-west and the south-east by

these means. Our answer is, in effect, a history of the negotiations which took place with regard to the Great Northern and Western Line. We answer on the 20th of October, 1854 :—" I have submitted to this Board the letter " of the Chairman of your Board, returning the consent " signed by our Chairman, and declining to accede to the " agreement annually entered into between the two Companies " for the last two years, and stating that it was the intention " of your Board to apply to Parliament in the next Session " for an Act to construct a Railway from Streamstown to " Tullamore. I am desirous to inform you that this Board " regret extremely this intention of your Directors, for it " compels them to give notice of a similar application for a " junction at Athlone.

" It has been from the first foundation of this Company " their opinion that the proper junction of the Railways of " the South and West of Ireland should be at Athlone, and " in this opinion the public and the military authorities " concur. This Board were reluctantly induced to consent " to a junction being made at Streamstown on the express " condition as stated in Mr. Ennis's letter, that our Com- " pany should obtain a certain portion of the Grand Canal " by purchase. The agreement for this purpose being at an " end, this Board cannot consent to a junction being made " at Streamstown. This Board have no desire to construct " the junction; they are quite willing that it should be " made by any party unconnected with either Company, or " to allow the Line to be made by your Company, with " fair arrangements for the traffic of our Company thereon, " their sole object being to have a junction constructed at " such a place as shall afford the greatest facility for the " traffic between the South and West of Ireland and the " most advantageous to the public." Then we find that afterwards we instigated the following proposal, which was

accepted by the Great Northern and Western. It is at page 89. It is a letter addressed by the Secretary of the Great Northern and Western to us. "I am instructed by the Promoters of the Great Northern and Western (of Ireland) Railway Company, to communicate to you the resolution they have come to, after an interview had by them this day with the Chairman of your Company, viz., that they approve the suggestion made by him; that your directors should make a proposition to the Midland Great Western Company; that that Company should abstain from prosecuting, in the ensuing Session, their intended Longford and Sligo and Streamstown and Tullamore Bills, and that your Company should abstain from prosecuting their Bill between Tullamore and Athlone, and that your Company should subscribe to and work the Tullamore and Athlone portion of the Great Northern and Western Railway, and that the Midland Company should subscribe to and work that portion of the Great Northern and Western Railway between Athlone and Sligo." The answer to that is, at least as we learn it at page 90, "I am instructed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, and to acquaint you that our Board has had an interview with the directors of the Midland Great Western Railway Company, at which the above letter was laid before them." The reply of the Midland Directors to that communication was that they could not entertain the proposition therein.

Now, if are accused, as we have been, by Mr. Serjeant Wrangham, of urging this scheme simply as a mode of compelling terms with them, I think the correspondence I have read must entirely negative any such proposition. From the first we agreed to refer all matters in difference, including the questions of where the junction should be, by whom it should be made, and all matters connected with the Grand Canal. When we have a distinct intimation, that no

such reference can be accepted upon any terms by them; when we find they cannot be carried out, by reason of the opposition of the Board of Trade, we are remitted to our original position even then. You find us acting in this spirit, that, Athlone being admitted on all hands as the best, and selected as the proper point for the Junction Line. we do not approach Athlone in a spirit of rivalry with you. Arrange, if you please, with us for a division of that Line—work half yourselves, and let us work the other: if you please, construct the Line yourselves, for the antecedent proposition was of that kind. In short, do anything you will—but do not let this block and this defect in the Railway system continue: make it yourselves, or let us, or third parties make it. However, it be, let the Line be made to Athlone, and let the possession of it, and these rivalries which you point to as a reason why it should not be made, be dispersed and satisfied by the fact of being yourselves the controllers and makers of it.

Now, Sir, could any thing be more reasonable and fair than this proposition on our part; and what are we asked now to do? In the correspondence before you, which has been read, I believe, this morning, we find them still harping on Streamstown, Streamstown; and Streamstown alone is the only thing they will hear of. Neither Great Northern and Western, nor any body, not even themselves, may make the Line from Athlone to Tullamore; it must be from Streamstown to Tullamore that the junction is to be made at all. Sir, is this reasonable? Is it right in the face of the public, and in the face of such a map as that with the communication plain and necessary on the face of it; is it reasonable such language should be held? Had they approached us with proposals for such an arrangement of traffic at Athlone as would have prevented an injurious competition between us and them; had they conceded that which the public sooner

or later must have—and if you pass the Streamstown Bill and reject ours—which the public sooner or later will have ; is it reasonable for them to stand out still in the face of this Committee and say, “that is our alternative,” instead of going to the real source of the evil between us, and pointing out such measures as they could suggest, and Parliament might adopt, which would give the public the full benefit of the Line, without exposing them to the inconvenience of competition. Our letters shew what our view on this subject is.

*The Chairman.*—That not having been known of before Mr. Serjeant Wrangham’s speech, we said to Mr. O’Malley, we would have no comment on it, and we think it had better stand on its own merits.

*Mr. Hope Scott.*—Then I leave it in your bosoms ; apart from any correspondence of that sort. And before I knew it had taken place I had on my notes memorandums which appeared to me to express the reasonable view of the case. A reference to those memorandums you will hardly deny me.

*The Chairman.*—Any thing you had previously to that you can refer to.

*Mr. Hope Scott.*—My view of the case is this. There is a bonâ fide Line to which, more or less, the Great Southern and Western must be considered as pledged by the relinquishing of that country on the part of the Great Northern and Western. It would not be fair to the local interest, and the names who are on the list of shareholders who are known to you ; the influential names which promote that Line would be exposed to injury on our part, if, under any circumstances, we were voluntarily to give up our Line, to say nothing of our deliberate conviction of the utility of that Line, and the ability of those persons to judge upon it. The Line to Athlone then I hold to be a public necessity. But if they desire the Line from Streams-



town to Tullamore, by all means let them have it. I believe they will do better to take a Line from Mullingar to Portarlington, if the traffic exists which they speak of, that will be better for their purposes, as far as we are concerned; in connection with the Northern and Western, let them take their Streamstown and Tullamore Line. But that would not cure our complaint. At Tullamore we are only two and a half miles longer to Dublin than they are. And how is that put an end to. As I have said, if the public required the Line from Tullamore to Athlone, you would, under ordinary circumstances, have put aside a plea founded on an incidental and local competition; but I am speaking in the same spirit in which we have always addressed the Midland Great Western, which has inspired the whole of our correspondence with them; and I say, we do not come to Athlone to compete with you for Dublin traffic; and what we are perfectly willing to do is this, to submit to any such terms as may be agreed upon between us; or, as in case of difference, may be adopted by the Committee to prevent any unfair or undue competition between our Line and theirs in those respective points between Athlone and Dublin. Of course these conditions would require to be carefully drawn and nicely looked into. The extent to which they would run is a matter I do not pretend to enter into. I do not even propose to go into detail; but I may tell you that such a principle is not unknown in Parliamentary legislation. When the Great Western obtained a Line between London and Basingstoke they had put into their Bill in favour of the South Western, who were the original possessors of the Line, a clause which would not apply strictly to this case, although it involves the principle to be worked out; a clause which comes to this, that the fares should be so regulated that the new Line

to Basingstoke should not unjustly compete with the old one.

Sir, There can be no greater evidence of sincerity on our part as regards the necessity of this connection and its merits, than that the incidental power of competition which we might justly claim we are willing to forego; and if the Committee pass our Bill we shall be perfectly ready to have that reduced into shape, and to have removed the last vestige of fear and prejudice which beset the mind of the Midland Great Western, and which renders them on this occasion that which no other Company can be long with impunity—the enemies of the public of Ireland. On that position it would be foolish of them to take their stand. The favour in which they are received between Athlone and Galway is not very high; if they add to that a general reputation of a desire to impede a great public communication, when they have coupled with it an offer to secure their property, I can only say they would be taking, in my opinion, an unwise and injudicious step, and one not likely to help them in future Sessions with Parliament itself, or with the public, upon whom, after all, their prosperity depends. Whether accepted or rejected by them, I say the Line is in itself a substantially good Line; required by the public and not the Company. Let the expenditure be made on a Line which, whether there be competition or not, will be valuable, and with a difference, as regards competition in this way, that on one you expend a double capital for a single object; on the other it is for a sound object, and where competition arises without design. In this case it is capable of explanation and devoid of difficulty.

The Committee-room was cleared, and, on parties being re-admitted,

The Chairman stated the Committee were of opinion, That the Preamble of the Great Southern and Western (of Ireland) Railway Extension from Tullamore to Athlone was proved.

That the Committee would insert provisions in the Bill of a stringent nature, to prevent reckless competition between the two Companies.

That the Preamble of the said Great Western Railway was partially proved, as far as regarded the Line from Streamstown to Clara.

In accordance with the views of the Committee, as expressed by the Chairman, a clause was framed and is now in the Bill, by which competition for traffic between Dublin and Athlone is guarded against.









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